



STATE OF NEW YORK
ENERGY OFFICE

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AGENCY BUILDING 2
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May 24, 1979

TO: T. K. DeBoer
FROM: Jack Spath *Jack*
SUBJECT: Uranium Ore Residues in Niagara Falls

During October - November 1978, at the request of the NYS Department of Health, the U.S. Department of Energy sponsored an aerial radiological survey of the Niagara Falls area. The survey, which was conducted by E. G. & G. Inc., identified 15 areas which exhibited either higher levels of radiation, or radioactive constituents not typical of the surrounding background. One of the areas identified was the parking lot of a bowling alley, the Pine Bowl Bowling Alley located at Pine Avenue and 97th Street in Niagara Falls. This area was identified by a follow-up ground survey team from Oak Ridge National Laboratory as having radiation levels 25 to 50 times normal background. Measurements taken in a pothole found in the area showed levels approximately 100 times background.

All areas identified in the survey are being investigated jointly by the New York State Departments of Health and Environmental Conservation. While most of these areas appear to be the result of slag from a discontinued phosphate milling operation, evidence indicates that the material found under the bowling alley parking lot is uranium and thorium bearing slag from the processing of niobium (columbium) ore at the Union Carbide Corporation facility, 47th Street, Niagara Falls. The niobium ore slag has sufficient uranium and thorium content to meet the "source" material definition making it a licensable radioactive material. In fact the Union Carbide facility has been licensed by the Atomic Energy Commission (now Nuclear Regulatory Commission) and subsequently by the New York State Department of Labor since 1961. It now appears that in 1961, prior to licensing, the slag was used as fill under the bowling alley parking lot.

A preliminary evaluation of the radiological health impact of the bowling alley parking lot by the staff of DEC and the Health Department indicate that the material should be removed to an appropriate disposal site. It is not clear who would be responsible for providing such remedial action if it is determined necessary. I am advised that the owner of the bowling alley has initiated or will be initiating legal action against

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Union Carbide in this regard. It should be noted that burial of similar material by Union Carbide was approved by the State in 1965. The land where the slag was buried was subsequently sold with the State's approval and is now a secure sanitary landfill.

I will continue to monitor this matter closely and keep you advised of any significant developments. There does not appear to be a need for any further action on our part at this time.

✓cc: William J. Kelleher